For beings a human birth is hard to win, then manhood; hardest of all to win is wisdom.

—SANKARACHARYA

# THEOSOPHY

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## AWAKENING MIND

A MOVEMENT of the Western mind toward whole and symmetrical views of man and of nature is the most significant evolutionary development of the twentieth century. Predicted in various ways by H. P. Blavatsky, grounded in the psychological cosmology of the Secret Doctrine, attended by inchoate human longing, this awakening has found clear expression, first of all, in the intuitive expressions of distinguished scientists. This is a wholly natural result of the further incarnation of Manas. The higher mind is the principle of first-hand, independent identification of the knower with the object to be known, and an increase in its operations on this plane may be expected to become evident by means of clear, intuitive perceptions of the nature of things. And since self-knowledge is the foundational form of human cognition, the significant stages of manasic awakening come as steps of awareness of the true nature of man.

Take, to begin with, the question of the differentiation of man from the animal aspect of his physical origins. Under the heading of Evolutionary Ethics in the *Encyclopædia Britannica,* J. Arthur Thomson remarked that "in the early ages of tentative man, hominoid rather than homines, there was a re-definition and re-thrilling of the moral fibres under the influence of the new synthesis or mutation—Man." With the coming, he added, of "reason and language and consciousness of history both past and possible, there must have been a re-tuning of the moral nature." Here is an account of the

emergence of Man which, while hardly explicit in terms of occult anthropogenesis, is none the less an entirely hospitable matrix for the Theosophic doctrine of the lighting up of Manas.

Then, at the one hundred and first meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, which came to a close on Jan. 1, 1938, the retiring president, Dr. Edwin Grant Conklin, of Princeton University, directed the attention of this gathering to the crucial importance of ethics for the future of mankind. A resolution passed by the association announced its acceptance of "the challenge to science for moral leadership in a disordered and puzzled world." In his address, Dr. Conklin, a biologist, gave the evolutionary law of the survival of the fittest a scope which, again, matches surprisingly with the exposition of the lines of evolution found in *The Secret Doctrine*. He said:

> Those who attempt to extend the principle of natural selection into the field of intellectual, social and moral qualities should remember that the standards of fitness are wholly different in these fields. Physically the fittest is the most viable and most capable of leaving offspring; intellectually the fittest is the most rational; socially the fittest is the most ethical. To attempt to measure intellectual or social fitness by standards of physical fitness is hopelessly to confuse the whole question, for human evolution has progressed in these three distinct paths. *Man owes his unique position in nature to this three-fold evolution, and although the factors of physical, intellectual and social progress are always balanced one against another, they are not mutually exclusive. All three may and do cooperate in such manner that each strengthens the other.* (*Science,* Dec. 31, 1937.)

Now ideas of this sort, while irenical to a spiritual conception of man's nature, do not affirm much more than the receptivity of the scientific mind to spiritual conceptions. Nor are such insights necessarily characteristic of many scientists. They come rather as profound intuitions which may be central to the individuals who give them voice, while remaining incidental and even irrelevant to the main body of scientific doctrine. The point to be taken into consideration here is that such suggestions represent to some extent a tide of inner realization that, for all its "objectivity" and devotion to impartial fact, the scientific idea of man for the most part reversed the order of importance of the factors in human development. A true science of man would lead out with first principles which declare the spiritual nature and origin of human beings, and would be grounded upon something more than the personal reconstructions

of distinguished individuals. Such a science would begin with statement of an unceasingly unfolding spiritual capacity and would develop a metaphysical basis for the interpretation and analysis of experience—as, for example, lies behind the Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali, which is a treatise on the scientific psychology of antiquity.

In the present age, however, Western scientific progress in this direction seems to have to take place in a framework of stubborn skepticism, so that in every case some kind of empirically derived matrix of fact precedes the metaphysical propositions which would unite science with philosophy.

Empiricisms vary. The experimental attitude of a worker in the psychological laboratory turns out to be very different, in most cases, from the empiricism of the clinician whose daily encounters sensitize him to *human* needs. The laboratory is a place where the isolated, limited functions of *parts* are examined in great detail. The therapist, on the other hand, is confronted by people who suffer pain. He is obliged to recognize that reductive theories based in the mechanisms of physiological psychology are of little value, since he finds it necessary to treat his patients as *wholes*. In time, his practice brings him to the very margins of the forbidden area of metaphysics, and in some cases, drawn by the need to give rational expression to assumptions which his practice compels, he crosses the line. This happened in the field of psychotherapy some years ago when Erich Fromm, one pioneer in the humanistic psychology now moving into the foreground of scientific investigation of man's nature, distilled his conclusions in an article in the *Saturday Review* for March 16, 1957 (reprinted in THEOSOPHY for November, 1957). Dr. Fromm's discussion, under the general heading of a series, "The Limitations of Psychoanalysis," was titled "Man Is Not a Thing." Passages from this article show, again, that impartial study of the human being leads the investigator right up to the portal of metaphysical inquiry. Dr. Fromm writes:

> The question is: *To which extent is psychology* (the knowledge of others and myself) *possible?* What limitations exist to such knowledge? And what are the dangers if these limitations are not respected?
>
> Undoubtedly the desire to know our fellow men and ourselves corresponds to a deep need in human beings. Man lives within a social context. He needs to be related to his fellow man lest he become insane. Man is endowed with reason and imagination;

his fellow man and he himself are problems which he cannot help trying to solve. The endeavor to understand man by thought is called psychology, "the knowledge of the soul."

However, complete rational knowledge is possible only of *things*. Things can be dissected without being destroyed; they can be manipulated without damage to their nature; they can be reproduced. *Man is not a thing*. He cannot be dissected without being destroyed. He cannot be manipulated without being harmed. And he cannot be reproduced artificially. Life in its biological aspects is a miracle and a secret, and man in his human aspects is an unfathomable secret. We know our fellow man and ourselves in many ways, yet we do not know him or ourselves fully because we are not things. The further we reach into the depths of our being, or someone else's being, the more the goal of full knowledge eludes us. Yet we cannot help desiring to penetrate into the secret of man's soul, into the nucleus of "he."

Psychology can show us what man is *not*. It cannot tell us what man, each one of us, *is*. The soul of man, the unique core of each individual, can never be grasped and described adequately. It can be "known" only inasmuch as it is not misconceived. The legitimate aim of psychology, as far as ultimate knowledge is concerned, is the *negative,* the removal of distortions and illusions, *not the positive,* full and complete knowledge of a human being.

Dr. Fromm continues, suggesting that the direct knowledge of another may be obtained by another means—by *love,* since this brings knowledge by identification or *union*—but whether this can be called "science" is somewhat of an open question. At any rate, as Dr. Fromm points out, such knowledge "transcends words."

But, Science or not, such declarations have their effect upon those working in the psychological sciences who feel similiar realizations. A prime consequence of dealing with other human beings is realization of the importance of *freedom* or "free will." The psychotherapist discovers that individuality, or selfhood, is a reality virtually interchangeable with individual responsibility. The irresponsible human being is a man of fragmented self. Psychological sickness comes to be defined as avoidance of responsibility. This is well put in a contribution by Maurice Kahn Temerlin, of the University of Oklahoma, to the new paperback volume, *Humanistic Viewpoints in Psychology,* published by McGraw-Hill (Frank T. Severin, editor, 1965). Prof. Temerlin says:

The avoidance of responsibility reduces selfhood because the experience of personal responsibility affirms the very existence of the self. Without responsibility there is no self in the sense

> of an integrated and autonomous identity which can experience itself as having effects. Conversely, whenever the individual cannot experience choice and responsibility, he feels himself to be (and probably will act as) a robot or automaton whose behavior is causally determined not by himself, but by situational exigencies. A pawn of fate has neither responsibility, anxiety, nor selfhood.

Dr. Temerlin's discussion of neurotic symptoms in this context of freedom-versus-determinism is an informing and wholly satisfying account of such problems, doubtless because by implication it restores the qualities of egoity to the human being.

In his foreword to an extract from Teilhard de Chardin's *The Phenomenon of Man,* the editor of this volume, Frank T. Severin, quotes the following from Erich Fromm's *The Sane Society*:

> Self-awareness, reason and imagination disrupt the "harmony" which characterizes animal existence. Their emergence has made man into an anomaly, into the freak of the universe. He is part of nature, subject to her physical laws and unable to change them, yet he transcends the rest of nature.

Here Dr. Fromm touches on questions which are at the heart of the problem of good and evil, and which, as *The Secret Doctrine* shows time after time, are behind the struggle of the free individual with the confinements of institutions as well as with the "laws" of animal nature. For Dr. Fromm, one may say, this is both an intuitive and an empirical judgment. The anthropogenesis of the Secret Doctrine adds its metaphysical ground.

Another contributor, Frank J. Kober, who writes on learning theory, shows that psychology can no longer ignore the presence of an independent moral intelligence in the human being.

> In the area of mature, normal adult human relations we find evidence for the repudiation of the law of effect, of the principle of reinforcement, and of the doctrine of hedonism (Allport). For it appears that the distinguishing mark of mature adulthood is *renunciation.* It is this that exposes the limitations inherent in a one- or even a two-factor theory of human learning. To act symbolically—to act with the ego involved—is to go counter to the principles used to explain learning on the lower levels. When I feel obligated, when I act from sentiments of honor, when I sacrifice, when I succeed at being virtuous, I thereby do violence to all that is associationistic, hedonistic, and evolutionary in myself. In doing this I stand above conditioning, above trial and error or perceptual problem solving—and my ego demands a principle to explain that which is so peculiarly human, and often

distinctly uncomfortable, in me. Learning and behavior are biological, hedonistic, *and ethical* (Mowrer and Kluckhohn).

These scattered quotations, chosen almost at random from *Humanistic Viewpoints in Psychology,* are sufficient evidence to support the claim of the first contributor, J. F. T. Bugental, who proposes that "a major break-through is occurring at the present time in psychology." It might be added that it is a break-through which may be thought of as prerequisite to a break-through in philosophy which should restore to currency some form of the Pantheism and Objective Idealism of the spiritual metaphysics of the Secret Doctrine—which alone can give a broad unity to all these discoveries and provide the needed support to the regenerating ethical reforms that must take place in the affairs of men.

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## SYNTHESIZING PROPOSITIONS FOR PSYCHOLOGY

Professor Ladd in his very philosophical and scientific hypothesis regards consciousness as a unit "of non-material nature [which] acts and develops according to laws of its own."

Man is double-faced; if the impulse comes from the "Wisdom above," the Force applied being noëtic or spiritual, the results will be actions worthy of the divine propeller; if from the "terrestrial, devilish wisdom" (psychic power), man's activities will be selfish, based solely on the exigencies of his physical, hence animal, nature. The above may sound to the average reader as pure nonsense; but every Theosophist must understand when told that there are *Manasic* as well as *Kamic* organs in him, although the cells of his body answer to both physical and spiritual impulses.

—*Psychic and Noëtic Action*

# HERETICS AND THE RENAISSANCE

## VIII—In the Light of Theosophy

The Gnosis supplanted by the Christian scheme was universal. It was the echo of the primordial wisdom-religion which had once been the heirloom of the whole of mankind.

THE days of Constantine were the last turning-point in history, the period of Supreme struggle that ended in the Western world throttling the old religions in favor of the new one, built on their bodies. This period, beginning with Buddha and Pythagoras at the one end and the Neo-Platonists and Gnostics at the other, is the only focus left in History wherein converge for the last time the bright rays of light streaming from the æons of time gone by, unobscured by the hand of bigotry and fanaticism. (*S.D.* I, Introductory.)

It was the new religion of the Nazarenes that wrought a change for the worse—in the policy of centuries. The made-up and dogmatic Christianity of the Constantinian period is simply an offspring of the numerous conflicting sects, half-castes themselves, born of Pagan parents. The Gnostics, or early Christians, were but the followers of the old Essenes under a new name. The *Christian* Gnostics sprang into existence toward the beginning of the second century, and just at a time when the Essenes most mysteriously faded away, which indicated that they were the identical Essenes, and moreover pure *Christists,* viz: they believed and were those who best understood what one of their own brethren had preached. (*Isis* I, 26; II, 324.)

The philosophical systems of the Gnostics and the primitive Jewish Christians, the Nazarenes and the Ebionites, show the views held in those days—outside the circle of Mosaic Jews—about Jehovah. He was identified by all the Gnostics with the evil, rather than with the good principle. For them, he was *Ilda-Baoth,* "the son of Darkness," whose mother, Sophia Achamoth, was the daughter of Sophia, the Divine Wisdom (the female Holy Ghost of the early Christians) —Akasa; while Sophia Achamoth personified the lower Astral Light or *Ether*. The astral light stands in the same relation to Akasa

and *Anima Mundi,* as Satan stands to the Deity. Ilda-Baoth, or Jehovah, is simply one of the Elohim, the seven creative Spirits, and one of the lower Sephiroth. (*S.D.* I, 197-8.)

It is in the religious doctrines of the Gnostics that the real meaning of the Dragon, the Serpent, the Goat, and all those symbols of powers now called *Evil,* can be seen the best; as it is they who divulged the esoteric nature of the Jewish Substitute for AIN-SOPH *in their* teachings; of the true meaning of which, while the Rabbins concealed it, the Christians, with a few exceptions, knew nothing. Surely Jesus of Nazareth would have hardly advised his apostles to show themselves as *wise* as the serpent, had the latter been a symbol of the *Evil one;* nor would the Ophites, the learned Egyptian Gnostics of "the brotherhood of the Serpent," have reverenced a living snake in their ceremonies as the emblem of WISDOM, the divine *Sophia* (and a type of the all-good, not all-bad), were that reptile so closely connected with Satan. The fact is, that even as a common ophidian it has ever been a dual symbol; and as a Dragon it had never been anything else than a symbol of the manifested Deity in its great Wisdom. There is no *Devil, no Evil, outside mankind to produce a Devil.* (*S.D.* II, 386-7.)

Evil is a necessity in, and one of the supporters of the manifested universe. It is a necessity for progress and evolution, as night is necessary for the production of Day, and Death for that of Life—*that man may live forever.*

Satan represents metaphysically simply the *reverse or the polar opposite* of everything in nature. He is the "Adversary," allegorically, the "murderer," and the great Enemy of *all,* because there is nothing in the whole universe that has not two sides—the reverses of the same medal. But in that case, light, goodness, beauty, etc., may be called Satan with as much propriety as the Devil, since they are the *adversaries* of darkness, badness, and ugliness. And now the philosophy and the *rationale* of certain Christian sects—called *heretical* and viewed as the abomination of the times—will become more comprehensible. We may understand how it was that the sect of SATANIANS came to be degraded, and were anathematized without any hope of vindication in a future day, since they kept their tenets secret. How, on the same principle, the CAINITES came to be degraded, and even the (Judas) ISCARIOTES; the true character of the *treacherous* apostle having never been correctly presented before the tribunal of Humanity.

As a direct consequence, the tenets of the Gnostic sects also become clear. Each of these sects was founded by an Initiate, while their tenets were based on the correct knowledge of the symbolism of every nation. Thus it becomes comprehensible why Ilda-baoth was regarded by most of them as the god of Moses, and was held as a proud, ambitious, and impure spirit, who had abused his power by usurping the place of the *highest God,* though he was no better, and in some respects far worse than *his brethren Elohim*; the latter representing the all-embracing, manifested deity only in their collectivity, since they were the fashioners of the first differentiations of the primary Cosmic substance for the creation of the phenomenal Universe. Therefore Jehovah was called by the Gnostics the Creator of, and one with Ophiomorphos, the Serpent, Satan, or EVIL. They taught that Iurbo and Adonai were "names of Jao-Jehovah, who is an emanation of Ilda Baoth" (*Codex Nazareus*). This amounted in their language to saying what the Rabbins expressed in a more veiled way, by stating that—"Cain had been generated by Samael or Satan." (*S.D.* II, 389.)

The fallen Angels are made in every ancient system the prototypes of *fallen* men—allegorically, and, *those men themselves*—esoterically. Thus the Elohim of the hour of creation became the "Beni-Elohim," the sons of God, among whom is Satan—in the Semitic traditions; war in heaven between Thraetaona and Azhi-dahaka, the destroying Serpent, ends on earth, according to Burnouf, in the battle of pious men against the power of Evil, "of the Iranians with the Aryan Brahmins of India." And the conflict of the gods with the *Asuras* is repeated in the Great War—the Mahabhârata. In the latest religion of all, Christianity, all the Combatants, gods and demons, adversaries in both the camps, are now transformed into Dragons and Satans, simply in order to connect EVIL personified with the Serpent of Genesis, and thus prove the new dogma. (*S.D.* II, 390.)

The Satan of the Old Testament, the Diabolos or Devil of the *Gospels* and *Apostolic Epistles,* were but the antagonistic principle in matter, necessarily incident to it, and not wicked in the moral sense of the term. The Jews, coming from the Persian country, brought with them the doctrine of *two principles.* They could not bring the *Avesta,* for it was not written. The early Church, at least the Pauline part of it, the Gnostics and their successors, further refined upon their ideas; and the Catholic Church adopted and adapted

them, meanwhile putting their promulgators to the sword. The Protestant is a reaction from the Roman Catholic Church. (*Isis* II, 500-501.)

*"Deus est Demon inversus"* of the kabalists now becomes clear. It is but the intense and cruel desire to crush out the last vestige of the old philosophies by perverting their meaning, for fear that their own dogmas should not be rightly fathered on them, which impels the Catholic Church to carry on such a systematic persecution in regard to Gnostics, Kabalists, and even the comparatively innocent Masons. How little the philosophy of the old secret doctrine was understood, is illustrated in the atrocious persecutions of the Templars by the Church, and in the accusation of their worshipping the Devil under the shape of the goat-Baphomet! (*Isis* II, 303, 302.)

Clement describes Basilides, the Gnostic, as "a philosopher devoted to the contemplation of divine things." This very appropriate expression may be applied to many of the founders of the more important sects which later were all engulfed in one—that stupendous compound of unintelligible dogmas enforced by Irenæus, Tertullian, and others, which is now termed Christianity. *If these must be called heresies, then early Christianity itself must be included in the number.* Basilides and Valentinus preceded Irenæus and Tertullian; and the two latter Fathers had less facts than the two former Gnostics to show that their *heresy* was plausible. Neither divine right nor truth brought about the triumph of their Christianity; fate alone was propitious. (*Isis* II, 123.)

The Gnostic Records contained the epitome of the chief scenes enacted during the mysteries of Initiation, since the memory of man; though even that was given out invariably under the garb of semi-allegory, whenever entrusted to parchment or paper. But the ancient Tanaïm, the Initiates from whom the wisdom of the Kabala (*oral tradition*) was obtained by the later Talmudists, had in their possession the secrets of the *mystery language,* and it is *in this language that the Gospels* were written. Thus while the three Synoptics display a combination of the pagan Greek and Jewish symbologies the *Revelation* is written in the mystery language of the Tanaïm—the relic of Egyptian and Chaldean wisdom—and St. John's Gospel is purely Gnostic. He alone who has mastered the esoteric cypher of antiquity—the secret meaning of the numerals, a common property at one time of all nations—has the full proof of the genius which was displayed in the blending of the purely Egypto-Jewish, Old Testa-

ment allegories and names, and those of the pagan-Greek Gnostics, the most refined of all the mystics of that day. (THEOSOPHY 4:137.)

The primitive pure Oriental gnosticism was completely corrupted and degraded by the different subsequent sects. (*Isis* I, 271 fn.) What with several generations of the most active Church Fathers ever working at the destruction of old documents and the preparation of new passages to be interpolated in those which happened to survive, there remains of the *Gnostics*—the legitimate offspring of the Archaic Wisdom-religion—but a few unrecognizable shreds. But a particle of genuine gold will glitter for ever; and, however garbled the accounts left by Tertullian and Epiphanius of the Doctrines of the "Heretics," an occultist can yet find even in them traces of those primeval truths which were once universally imparted during the mysteries of Initiation. Among other works with most suggestive allegories in them, we have still in the so-called *Apocryphal Gospels,* and the last discovered as the most precious relic of Gnostic literature, a fragment called *Pistis-Sophia,* "Knowledge-Wisdom." Those who translate *Pistis* by "Faith," are utterly wrong. The word "faith" as *grace* or something to be believed in through unreasoned or blind faith, is a word that dates only since Christianity. Nor has Paul ever used this term in this sense in his Epistles; and Paul was undeniably—an INITIATE (THEOSOPHY 4:141.)

They persecuted the Gnostics, murdered the philosophers, and burned the kabalists and the masons; and when the day of the great reckoning arrives, and the light shines in darkness, what will they have to offer in the place of the departed, expired religion? What will they answer, these pretended monotheists, these worshippers and *pseudo*-servants of the one living God, to their Creator?

And thus, one by one, perished the Gnostics, the only heirs to whose share had fallen a few stray crumbs of the unadulterated truth of primitive Christianity. (*Isis* II, 249.) But if the Gnostics were destroyed, the *Gnosis,* based on the secret science of sciences, still lives. The ancient *Kabala,* the Gnosis, or traditional *secret* knowledge, was never without its representatives in any age or country. (*Isis* II, 37, 38.)

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Sources used in this installment: *The Secret Doctrine, Isis Unveiled,* and the article "The Esoteric Character of the Gospels" by H. P. Blavatsky, reprinted in THEOSOPHY, Volume 4.

# THE LIBERALISM OF H. P. BLAVATSKY

> Men and parties, sects and schools are but the mere ephemera of the world's day. TRUTH, high-seated upon its rock of adamant, is alone eternal and supreme.
>
> —H. P. BLAVATSKY

THEOSOPHISTS who are blessed by the liberalism of H. P. Blavatsky's presentation of Theosophy are doubly conscious of their gratitude to her when they find themselves in the midst of rabidly proselytizing religious fanatics, or of those who will associate only with co-religionists lest they become morally contaminated by consorting with the unbeliever. H.P.B. alone had the courage to proclaim the existence of "unconscious Theosophists." She asked no formal declaration of faith of those who came to her. The "signs" which she recognized were not ones that the student, or even the sincere inquirer, manifested consciously. Pledges of loyalty, and assurances of devotion, she knew were not worth the paper on which they were written if they ended there. Better an earnest inquirer who hesitated before giving his allegiance to a cause, than the enthusiast whose interest falters at the first hurdle. Theosophy needs no creed-props, no dogma-supports. It can stand alone because it is essentially non-sectarian. All Truth is non-sectarian. The laws of Nature which we recognize in the blossoming of flowers, in the migration of birds, in the revolution of the sun and stars, do not depend on our recognition. If some of these have been partially codified, it is only to satisfy the curious or the inquiring mind. These Laws operate though we deny them. And there is the test.

We can learn much from the religious bigot. He makes us take stock of our own position and examine ourselves to see just how bigoted we ourselves may be, for to be a student of Theosophy is unfortunately not necessarily synonymous with being broadminded. We may be nominal Theosophists, but unless we practice an all-inclusive Brotherhood which includes the sinner as well as the saint, we have no right to the holy name. The failure of those who

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NOTE.—Reprinted from THEOSOPHY 39:289.

flocked about H.P.B. in the early days of the Movement to realize this *sine qua non* of the true Theosophist forced H.P.B. to pronounce the Movement a failure despite fourteen years of her unceasing struggle. She was liberal enough and wise enough to give credit to the "profane" who disagreed with her. Her compassion reached out to embrace her bitterest denouncers. It was to the sick and the searcher that she had come.

The self-reliance, the self-dependence—the reliance on the SELF, dependence on the SELF, which the Buddha had taught and which H.P.B. reiterated untiringly—is the surest strength she left her students. They afford the key which will open the door to that freedom where dogma is unknown, where the only form acknowledged is the Form of the Spirit. To associate day in and day out with those who think as we do, who live as we do, and who adopt even the rules of daily conduct which we approve, may be pleasant to some—but it is not going to do us much good. It is positively dangerous. Groups and cliques may grow up among theosophists just as they do among the professors of any religious philosophy, among scientists, literary men, and plumbers. Each little group is satisfied with its exclusive way of life. It condemns all who think and live differently. How often, if we can lay aside our conceit in regard to religion and philosophy, our literary work or our trade, we find more wisdom through a five minutes' conversation with a "stranger," than in endless hobnobbing with confrères of our own "school"! Better a good fighting opposition through which we are forced to examine our own faith than the unquestioned—and often unthinking—corroboration of "yes-men" afraid to think for themselves. In our adversaries we shall find many an unconscious theosophist. And from them we shall learn.

Some theosophical students laugh at the dogma of the churches; they turn deaf ears to the orthodoxy of the Brahmin priest. The Zoroastrian Dastur, the Muslim Mobedh talk themselves hoarse, but with no effect. They are sure they have the truth and nothing but the truth. They go so far as to tell us they have ALL the truth. Theosophists, too, have the truth, but a great deal that is not true creeps in under the guise of devotion, and we may become as fanatical and as intolerant on our side as do those who damn all who do not accept their faith.

Theosophy does not stand or fall on a question of dogma, nor would it suffer, in one sense, if there were never another lecture,

study-class or meeting. Burn the last of Theosophical books—THEOSOPHY would not be affected. There are those who become so engrossed in the importance of the manifested aspect of the Movement that they ignore the Unmanifested Spirit—like the Samkyas who make the Unmanifest Avyaktam their goal, and forget that Mula-prakriti is but a Veil which hides the Real. Their self-imposed discipline becomes an end, not a means. So convinced do they become of the importance of their chosen hour of meditation or of study that they will ignore their most obvious duty to a sick or suffering comrade. They ridicule their Roman Catholic brother who would allow nothing to make him miss his early Mass, while they themselves have become morally and physically dependent on regular lectures and weekly meetings—"philosophical pills" without which they fear to weaken before the onslaughts of the world.

Others, reversing the position, feel that Theosophy depends on them and on their faithful acceptance of whatever they hear or read, and forget that we must interpret what we study in terms of others' and our own needs. H.P.B. went out of her way to shock people out of their complacent, non-thinking, and tamasic acceptance of her words. She sought love-inspired cooperation; she had no use for obedience based on fear. In H.P.B.'s Theosophy there is no place for priest or autocrat. Better think wrongly, so we think for ourselves, and come to the right conclusion by our own efforts, than to be spoon-fed with palatable and sweet-tasting tid-bits of philosophy. Better even to be bravely and courageously in the wrong than to have an unreasoned and counterfeit faith—though that faith happen to be in the truth. Life asks that we be hot or cold—the lukewarm she will spew from her mouth!

The Theosophist is a Warrior, ready to fight his own battles on the Path. He does not ask that a Master lead him by the hand and point out all the holes and stones which make dangerous the Way. He is not afraid to sleep lest he waste time, or to lend his help in a street accident lest he involve himself in the karma of another, or be late to a meeting. He is free from all dogma; ritualism is repugnant to him. The books he will read may be in the "Index" of his comrades, but if he learns from them to appreciate men's hearts the better, it is all he will ask. He forages in book-stores for himself; he does not wait that a book be recommended to him. For him Theosophy is too high and holy to want his support or his allegiance. His love is such that he is humble. It is not Theosophy that can

gain anything from him, he reasons. Masters do not need him, neither does H.P.B. But he cannot live a day without them. We are here today, all-important in our own estimation. We shall die, many of us, long before 1975—is the periodic out-giving of the philosophy to suffer for our absence? Will Masters fail to keep their "appointment" because *we* are not there?

There have been times when to proclaim Theosophical truths meant death and worse. To be found reading a philosophical book proscribed by the church sufficed to condemn the reader to years in a dungeon or to be broken on the wheel. It might well become the duty of any of us, even in our present life, to retire to the forest, unknown and unrecognized by the world, to carry on the work of Masters. There would be in that day no *Secret Doctrine,* no *Key to Theosophy,* no *Gathas* or *Upanishads.* We would be without pen or paper. There would be no question of an assembly of friends freely discussing those spiritual truths now so close to our hearts. The only orator we should hear would be the silent beating of our eager heart. We would be forced to care for ourselves, cook our own food over wood-fires, and eat what the forest might afford. Ours the task to remain as silent witnesses of the Truth. Should we then say that Theosophy is *not*—that it has been withdrawn from the world? That Masters have deserted us? Is our Theosophy so weak that it depends on books and meetings? Is the great Movement to be maintained by men and women who live apart and feed on what they call "magnetically clean food," or by even one ardent soul that still aspires? If our moral efficiency depends on all these ephemeral niceties, if our atmosphere is so refined that it can be defiled by the presence of the meat-eater in our midst, then have we not known the Theosophy of H.P.B., who ate when and what she could, and who, because of her poverty, often went hungry. She laid no stress on rules of diet; she could enjoy no protected hours of quiet. To her a cruel word, an uncharitable act, a lapse in the practice of Brotherhood was infinitely more degrading than pounds of red, or even raw meat eaten by one in dirty rags.

We call ourselves her followers. We use her name day and night, and never tire quoting her words. Are we ready to throw form and ritual, creed and dogma—yes, to the last other-imposed, unreasoned observance—to the winds, that the air may purify them: or blow them beyond our reach? Those of us who would approach Masters' world must divest ourselves of all delusions, especially of that which

makes us rely on or put our trust in any support other than the perfectly spontaneous living of the Spiritual Life—a life that becomes impossible the moment we separate ourselves from the meanest of human creatures. For in so isolating ourselves from our fellow-man, we isolate ourselves from the Masters.

> No differences can be observed by the true disciple in any other disciple who is perhaps of a different faith. All pursue truth. Roads differ, but the goal of all remains alike.
>
> (*Hindu Chela's Diary*)

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## THEOSOPHY AS UNIVERSAL CATALYST

Practical Theosophy may, in short, be justly regarded as the universal "coach," a tutor of world-wide knowledge and experience, and of an erudition which not only assists scientific or moral service in earthly life, but fits them for the *lives* to come, if those pupils will only study the universe and its mysteries *within themselves,* instead of studying them through the spectacles of orthodox science and religions. Viewed as a philosophy, Theosophy in its practical work is the alembic of the Mediæval alchemist. It transmutes the apparently base metal of every ritualistic and dogmatic creed (Christianity included) into the gold of fact and truth. This is why, when applying for Admission into the Theosophical Society, no one is asked what religion he belongs to, nor what his deistic views may be. These views are his own personal property and have naught to do with the Society. Because Theosophy can be practiced by Christian or Heathen, Jew or Gentile, by Agnostic or Materialist, or even an Atheist, provided that none of these is a bigoted fanatic, who refuses to recognize as his brother any man or woman outside his own special creed or belief. Count Leo N. Tolstoy does not believe in the Bible, the Church, or the divinity of Christ; and yet no Christian surpasses him in the practical bearing out of the principles alleged to have been preached on the Mount. And these principles are those of Theosophy; not because they were uttered by the Christian Christ, but because they are universal ethics, and were preached by Buddha and Confucius, Krishna, and all the great Sages, thousands of years before the Sermon on the Mount was written.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

# YOUTH FORUM

*There are moments familiar to everyone when all our beliefs, hopes, and accomplishments seem to be meaningless—when work realizes nothing and life seems without conscious purpose. The depth of this loneliness and despondency is certainly an unavoidable reality. What Theosophical principles could guide one out of this condition?*

Let us assume that this inquiry comes from one who has experienced a "shock of recognition"—discovery that even the deepest longings have been diluted with compromise. Do, then, all hopes end in human weakness, and high ideals have the history of their pursuit recorded in failure?

Such a "questioner" dwells in each of us. When one asks if there is meaning or purpose in the world, every relationship is forced into question. The aimless momentum of habits, the confinements of conventions or clichés are seen as part of the past repeating itself, affecting only the surface of life and casting their residues on some barren beach. Another "self" in us stirs at such a moment, seeing that the very order of life stands on trial. The wondering, then, of what "principles'" to rely on is part of a much larger searching: a quest for a living texture of understanding and justice which is not the hollow echo of age-old orthodoxies.

To save this situation, the temptation is to quote a few lucid statements from Madame Blavatsky or W. Q. Judge which epitomize their capacity to chart the self-determining potential in man—their recognition of the soul's secret metabolism. But this is not really what the questioner asked for. The inquiry is a silent cry for psychological help. There are times when one exhausts the shallow ideals of his culture, and only the pain of being alone remains.

Where to begin is the pressing question here. Actually, there is no definitive answer—no applicable theosophical "Catechism," no final explanation of Theosophy or what it means. The difficulty with discussion of this inner turmoil is that Theosophy *is* abstract, and is understood only with effort. Even the exhaustive works of H. P.

Blavatsky are "rough outlines," she says, and "are by no means complete, nor do they pretend to give out the full text."

Obviously no solution lies in using abstruse theosophical language. If we are really concerned with initiating a dialogue, then the other person's idiom of longings, hopes, and ideals will be our primary concern. What words will awaken the force of his hidden potential as a human being? At this point it does not matter much what vocabulary we use. The language of heroic vision and effort can be translated as effectively into the image of a man breaking the bonds of his personal limitations and weaknesses, as it can be through the story of a Job or the myth of a Prometheus.

The uncharted terrain of intuition, of unspoken affirmation, of silent identity, lies before us. This is a moment of truth for our capacity to be human beings. The moralizing of what one "ought" to think, which comes so easily at such times, is its own warning of weakness. Our position hinges on a spontaneous ability to form a bridge with our friend between the personal Odyssey of the soul and its meaning in the realm of the ideal—the latter as "an ardent aspiration for a universal reign of Justice—hence a latent desire for light, harmony, and goodness," as H.P.B. says.

Possibly we can create a mood for personal examination of that "faith in ideals;" we can question whether it is possible to find any "texts" in Theosophy which can be suggested; we can ask whether *any* doctrine is sufficiently additive to our nature, or whether as statements they are documents of a wisdom into which we have yet to be initiated. A stated principle is a mental center for action—a point of departure which suggests meaning and purpose. But a principle must also be generic to the individual, not only to books or teachings. Thus, even the student of Theosophy must rediscover—or reanimate—the alchemy of doctrines which become processes, of ideals which become a basis of action.

What is true in psychotherapy is true in the study of Theosophy: nothing can be known except that which is experienced. Here, surely, we can agree with Emerson: "Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind."

# *letters • questions • comment*

*To accept the doctrine of reincarnation, we must first accept the immortality of the Soul as a fact. Is there any substantial proof of the Soul's immortality?*

How refreshing it is to have anyone ask for proof concerning anything! We except those engaged in "count-downs" and scientific research. Almost everyone else seems satisfied to accept any statement if it is conventionally presented and frequently repeated. Is this not a sad commentary upon the mental characteristics of probably the majority of people? Why, in the area of religion, metaphysics and related subjects, are we taught to build our house of hope on the shifting foundations of belief and assumed *authority?*

Consider the great advancements made in science, art, philosophy. All these are based on creations of the individual mind or controlled by the mind, not developed from fabricated authority. It is precisely in those areas in which man has accomplished the most and of which he is proudest that Knowledge, product of the Mind, based on well established premises, has placed in man's hands the power to alleviate his insecurity. But the security attained can only be maintained by corresponding progress in the realm of religion, ethics, and metaphysics. What is the situation in this area?

When approaching religion we are too often asked to ignore our *noëtic* power of reason and accept the *psychic* appeal. To submit to authoritarian impositions that have not changed for centuries and never have been based on logically consistent premises—here, in this realm, we are taught to believe, to ignore our reason and thus cut ourselves off from the realm of Knowledge, Truth, Wisdom. So many today seem to take the position expressed by the person who said, "I have made up my mind, so don't confuse me with the facts."

So we say again, it is refreshing to have someone question our premises, for on these the entire system of thought depends. By considering the factors involved in the idea of immortality, we follow the instructions given by the Apostle Paul who taught the "brethren" to search all things and to "hold fast to that which is

good." Was it not the great and wise Solomon who placed Wisdom ahead of all possessions? So we, being interested in Theosophy, the Wisdom Religion, should be foremost exemplars of those who "prove all things [and] hold fast to that which is good."

But what is good? What is the nature of that to which we should hold fast? In this context, good is that which is logical, consistent, capable of bearing the full force of unprejudiced examination. Good in the realm of the mind is self-sufficient and does not wither under critical analysis. We have met many persons who seem to take a kind of profit-and-loss attitude to this question of immortality. They seem to say, So I'll accept the idea of immortality along with the other *must-believe* dogmas of religion. Then if it is true, I'll get the reward. If it is not true, I'll only be in the same condition as all other persons, so what can I lose?

It seems to us that they can lose a great deal indeed. They lose the joy that is the reward of an honest mind in its search for truth. Since Mind is the Human Soul, attitudes of mental indifference and hypocritical attempts to play both sides of the question deaden the sensibility and creative faculty of the mind. Should we conclude the human soul is immortal, then we can appreciate the extent of damage that neglect of the mental processes inflicts upon the Soul. But can we prove the Soul's immortality? Each must answer this on the basis of his own research. Factors substantiating reincarnation help here. The proposition of a Spiritual Evolution provides a basis of satisfactory investigation and explanation to all of man's superior qualifications, actual or potential. The basic truth on this important subject is like all truth, simple and perfectly demonstrable to anyone willing to resolve the problem on the basis of logic. In fact, it is so simple that it is generally overlooked. When not overlooked, the significance of the evidence is all too often unappreciated.

First, then, what is the nature of our proof? As noted, it must be of the type that depends on reason and not personal bias or belief. Immortality implies continuity of consciousness. Continuity of consciousness implies permanency. Where can we find anything in this changing Universe that is permanent, changeless, in fact that is not even subject to change? To change is ultimately to cease to be "that which has a beginning must have an ending." So, wherever we look, there we observe change. Birth, growth, death, followed by rebirth as applied to all forms, circumstances, all bodies, human, ani-

mal, vegetable, mineral. There is, however, one exception—an individual consciousness which outlasts many personalities "deaths and rebirths." We know not of its beginning or its ending. We cannot reason it in or out of being. It is the closest thing to us, our most intimate possession, yet we cannot understand it. It simply is. All alike are aware of its indestructible, changeless nature. Yet the greatest sage knows no more about It fundamentally than does the average man. It is that which has not changed within the entire range of our experience, our life. Since It has remained changeless throughout all experience, what right have we to assume that It will ever change? If, then, It does not change, It has the basic characteristic of immortality, *i.e.,* changelessness. So, if we reason that that which *is* subject to change *cannot* be immortal, we must also conclude that that which is *not* subject to change *is* immortal.

That which within the range of our experience has never changed is our most precious possession—is possessed by all. More accurately, It possesses all. It is our sense of identity, our sense of I am I. Try to prove or disprove this basic fact. It simply cannot be done. Everything else about us and within us has changed, will continue to change, but It remains constant. Is your sense of identity, I am I, any less or any more today than it was yesterday, last month, last year, or within the range of your conscious memory, or, as psychology now shows, your unconscious memory as well? It is the only *Spiritual Intuition* common to all mankind. Maybe we can contest this latter statement, but the reality of I am I is incontestable, unchangeable, evidence of immortality. This is the heart, the continuing reality behind all metaphysics.

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### Intuitive Awareness of Continuity

Our interest in the future, how strange it is if we can never hope to see the future. That interest rarely seems to desert us, and in itself appears inexplicable were we not possessed of an intuition which tells us that we shall have a part in it, that in some sense it already belongs to us, that we should bear it continually in mind, since it will be ours.

—W. Macneile Dixon

# THE TIMELESSNESS OF JOY

ASPIRANTS to wisdom in all ages have been known to complain of the effort required, of the years and even lifetimes of study that are necessary, and of the disciplines incumbent upon those who would reach the goal. Why, we ask, must progress be so slow? Is there not some way to minimize effort, to curtail study, and to temper discipline? Why should those who are sincere in their desire to reach the heights be required to wait so long? One of the most common defects in human character and the most difficult with which they have to contend in their disciples, say the Masters, is the tendency to *judge by appearances*—the tendency to look outward for the causes of their troubles instead of within, to think that people and events stand in their way, that family and business responsibilities are hindrances to progress.

There is a common saying that everything has two sides. Translated into theosophical terms, this probably means that any proposition one takes up for consideration, or any objective he sets out to achieve, can be pursued either from the point of view of the personality, which is mortal and limited, or from that of the Reincarnating Ego, which is immortal and almost omniscient in its nature. And these two *Manases,* or Minds, it is well to understand, employ entirely different sets of standards in their work of evaluation. The personality's conceptions of time, said Robert Crosbie, "have no effect upon the Ego; karmic conditions alone move him." Is it possible that in our desire to measure progress and to be given some sign of personal recognition by the Master we are thinking only in terms of the lower, and not the higher, man? Might it be that in our preoccupation with "time" we negate the work of Spirit, and thus render ourselves earthbound ere the task begins?

In ancient symbology, the path toward spiritual enlightenment has ever been marked by seven stages, or portals. By some, these stages, unfortunately, have been materialized—and the path conceived as a long and tortuous road, with travel thereon an almost endless journey and the portals visualized as heavily-guarded gates

through which the disciple must fight his way to the distant heights beyond. Is it any wonder the journey seems endless, and the Masters appear to be so far away? Is it any wonder we often feel discouraged? From the point of view of the Ego—or of the Self, which we really are—time and distance do not exist. For the Ego, the travelling and the goal are one: the seeming distance between the portals being metaphysical, rather than physical, equations. And if the sweet smell of success escapes our sense, if we find no joy in working for others along the way, what can it mean but that we are still tied to "time," thinking only in terms of the personality?

The seven portals, in esoteric philosophy, symbolize the seven states of substance, or of consciousness—each having its own definite rate of vibration. Like sieves of different mesh, these portals exist one within the other—not separate in time or space. In terms of *The Secret Doctrine,* they are in "coadunition with each other but not in consubstantiality." It is through these metaphysical nets of vibration, the increasingly finer gossamer of impersonality, that the aspirant to union with the Self must pass. But how can the individual whose personality is honey-combed with irresolvable doubts and ambitions, with the sharp-edged stones of *kama-manas,* penetrate the progressively finer meshes of the occult universe? Can a camel pass through the eye of a needle, or a billiard-ball through a coffee-drain? If disciples would be more concerned with the karmic conditions in which they find themselves, and less concerned with "time," if they would pay more attention to the actions of their own minds and emotions than they do to externals, they would probably penetrate the veil, and would find joy in everything they have to do, totally undisturbed by events.

Past, present, and future are one for the Spirit. Hence events, from the spiritual point of view, are stationary, and *we* move through them. The joy or sorrow experienced in any situation, as well as the duration of the event, are ever and always therefore, in terms of the individual's own consciousness—in the ideas he holds, the feelings he harbors, and the attachments he has allowed himself to form.

It is the knots of the heart, evidently, that hold us back, and that make us sad. It is the boulders of personal attachment—in body, in emotion, and in mind—that cause the friction we feel as we pass through events. And if we were able to dissolve these attachments, and assimilate our consciousness with the Divine, which every man has the power to do, we would not feel the "sad" experiences that

pull most people down, it would not require weeks, months and years to get back to normal after an experience, as is so often the case, nor would we perpetually wear a frown upon our faces. If we were able to *de-personalize*—which does not mean to become cold and un-feeling, but to dissolve those personality-based attitudes, desires, and biases which no one admires—the gates to all the portals would open, and we would know the timelessness of joy.

"You may go through the appointed course," said William Q. Judge, "in 700 births, in seven years, or in seven minutes." Which it will be depends neither upon time nor events but upon *ourselves,* upon our ability to accept whatever karmic conditions exist, to forget ourselves in working for others, and to find joy in whatever we have to do.

On the plane of joy, the ultimate divisions of time collapse, and exist no more. And joy is the product of the human heart, as the following allegory shows:

> There was a great god-sage called Narada . . . He travelled everywhere, and one day he was passing through a forest, and he saw a man who had been meditating until the white ants had built a huge mound round his body, so long had he been sitting in that position. He said to Narada, "Where are you going?" Narada replied, "I am going to heaven." "Then ask the God of Heaven when he will be merciful to me, when I shall attain freedom." Further on Narada saw another man. He was singing and dancing, and he said, "O Narada, where are you going?" Narada said, "I am going to heaven." "Then ask when I shall attain freedom."
>
> So Narada went on. In the course of time he came again by the same road, and there was the man who had been meditating till the ant-hills had grown round him. He said, "O Narada, did you ask about me?" "O yes." "What did he say?" "He told me that you would attain freedom in four more births." Then the man began to weep and wail, and said, "I have meditated until an ant-hill has been raised around me, and I have to endure four more births yet!"
>
> Narada went on to the other man. "Did you ask about me?" "O yes. Do you see this tamarind tree? I have to tell you that as many leaves as there are on that tree, so many times you will be born, and then you will attain freedom." Then the man began to dance for joy, and said, "After so short a time I shall be free!" A voice came, "My child, you shall have freedom this instant." (*Kurma Purana*)

THE TIMELESSNESS OF JOY!

# on the lookout

*"The Light and the Gate"*

Since the appearance of Raynor Johnson's first major work, *The Imprisoned Splendour,* Lookout has noted a clearly-evident development of specific theosophic themes in other writings of this University of Melbourne physicist. *The Light and the Gate* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1964) is not however, a direct attempt to correlate theosophical tenets with contemporary advances in either science or religion, but rather an account of the life and thought of four men whom Johnson feels have pointed the way toward a general spiritual enlightenment of the future. The first of these four is George William Russell—"A.E." known to Theosophists through his association with the Theosophical Society—and the last is the Reverend Leslie Dixon Weatherhead, English clergyman whose forthright presentation of reincarnation has appeared in several treatises of outstanding clarity and forcefulness.

It is from the perspective of reincarnation, moreover, that Dr. Weatherhead was able to convey to the Christian laity a subtly different outlook on death. Although he did not continually emphasize reincarnation in his sermons, Weatherhead was able to intimate that death should most naturally be regarded as a temporary "holiday" from the stress of earthly experience, rather than a permanent removal to a state wherein the evolution of mind ceases. These remarks on "salvation" suggest the tone and the level of communication which Weatherhead established within the context of Christ's original teachings:

> I want to try to train my own mind to think about death as I think of my summer holidays. . . . Perhaps we ought to feel like that about our loved ones who have gone beyond these voices. We miss them, but they have gone for their holy days, and that of course was the origin of the word "holidays."
>
> I still harbour many doubts and ask many questions. A mind that does not do so has stopped making progress into truth. . . . To be saved is to be shown the track that leads you where you want to be. To be saved is not a transaction, it is not to be at the

end of your journey, it is to be at the end of your wandering. So that, in a sense, you can be saved, now, in a minute, by finding the road, but you will have but begun the process of "being saved."

*Dr. Pratt on "Karma"*

Dr. Johnson selects a passage of special significance from his own personal correspondence with Dr. Ambrose Pratt:

You write, "I wonder why you say, There are certain sublime experiences we may not seek to communicate to anyone still living within terrestrial boundaries. The limitations of these boundaries are considered necessary in order that the design of the individual life be worked out." Then your comment, "I cannot think it would make for dissatisfaction with earthly life leading to withdrawal from it. Should it not make for wonder, thanksgiving, and inspiration to appreciate that the goodness of God is so great?"

Here is my reply. For karma, for reasons created by his past lives anterior to this earth life, a man has unconsciously created the design, generally speaking, of his Fate during his present earthly existence. The kind of temptations, difficulties, etc., are in the big events already there before him. Will he overcome them or will he fail? He has freewill, the power to choose. But Raynor, my dear fellow, if you had it your way you would load the dice. There is, in other words, interference with the design of the life of a religious or mystically-minded man if he is buoyed up by "wonder, thanksgiving and inspiration" through learning of those sublime experiences, those higher mystical states. In order to make progress, in order that his self may grow, the religious man or mystic has to struggle, suffer pain, perhaps lose faith, perhaps, oh horror, be lost in the Dark Night of the Soul. There can be no short cuts for him. While he is on earth a certain limitation has to be his lot.

Later on, if he has successfully overcome his trials and his supreme test, he will, on reaching supernal realities be far better qualified to realise the sublime experiences—and this because of the growth of his soul. But it grew through doubt, pain, through the hard way, through experience of despair. If the way had been made easy by certain knowledge of the mystical glory, such growth would not have occurred.

*A New Renaissance?*

Dr. Johnson concludes *The Light and the Gate* with an essay on the possible future of religion:

The creative life of vital ideas of the early Christians has become lost in a great Organisation. Although from time to time

the imprisoned life has broken through and emerged to stir men afresh, it has always been through inspired individuals—and often at the cost of creating a new organisation. Much attention is being given today to what is called an ecumenical movement to counter the fissiparous tendency of organisation. Suppose it succeeds, so that one large Organisation replaces many smaller ones, this would still leave unaffected the basic problem: what is its future? Is spiritual renaissance possible, or to be anticipated?

A.E. once suggested that as the wedding of Christianity with Greek culture was once spiritually fruitful, a new wedding of Christianity with the culture of the East might result in a renaissance. It *might* be so, and I sometimes wonder if the earliest indications of this are not to be seen in the increasing interest of the West in Eastern thought. Certainly the major opposition of our age in the realm of thought, seems to me not between one religious standpoint and another but between all those who seek to live with a faith in spiritual values and realities, and, on the other hand, those who ignore or deny these in the interests of a self-sufficient humanism or materialism.

If this new renaissance is some day achieved, I think it will be through a gradual and individual cross-fertilisation: not by any activity on the level of organisation.

In all attempts to communicate in the matter of religious experience, there will be a new honesty. So long as words continue to be used without complete sincerity, the basis of religious observance must remain formal and worthless.

*The Lunar-Weather "Myth"*

A four-line heading to an article "Tempestuous Moon," by Joseph H. Jackson, reads: "When Science knows that anything it doesn't understand is necessarily nonsense it's a little difficult to get new, important, but understood facts recognized. Science knew astrology —and anything they thought sounded like astrology, therefore— was nonsense. Therefore the Moon couldn't really affect our weather." (*Analog*—a science-fact, science-fiction magazine—December, 1964.) The article reviews typical attitudes of men in "science" ranks who have been dogmatically contemptuous of folklore and its sometimes intuitively-expressed truth. Mr. Jackson begins:

The eradication of myths is most difficult. Like crab grass, they keep springing up even after they have been torn out by the roots. . . . A hoary astrological notion had it that the Moon was somehow related to water and moisture. . . . The great Shakespeare himself did not hesitate to call the Moon "the governess of floods," and referred to it as "the wat'ry star" or "moist star."

. . . Farmers have never doubted that the Moon influences the weather, and almanacs have reflected their lore. Even though it has made them the constant butt of grammar-school students of general science, farmers have kept on planting, haying, and harvesting by phases of the Moon. The experts, on the other hand, have just as consistently rejected the myth of a connection between the Moon and the weather.

Does not one of the world's most respected encyclopedias, *Americana,* state bluntly that "Despite many prevalent superstitious beliefs, the Moon has no proven effect on day-to-day weather, the growth of crops, or many other fanciful representations ascribed to it"? This is echoed in countless other authoritative works. . . . And the point is hammered down securely in the official volume of the American Meteorological Society, the weighty *Compendium of Meteorology,* which proclaims that "No one has ever proved in a single case to date that during or after a given arrangement of the moon or the planets any weather phenomenon occurred more frequently or less frequently than would have been expected from chance."

*Are Apologies Due the Ancients?*

Mr. Jackson continues:

But this bubble of certainty was to burst in 1962, pricked by a discovery based on the relations of the phases of the Moon to precipitation data taken from a routine Weather Bureau report available to anyone who cared to ask for it—U.S. Weather Bureau Technical Paper No. 16, 1952, "Maximum 24-hour Precipitation in the United States," by A. H. Jennings. The tables were turned with a vengeance. The idea that the Moon does not influence the weather was proved to be a full-fledged myth—of science!

This reversal of opinion is, of course, hardly a surprise to a reader of H. P. Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine,* for the perspective of a continually-evolving solar system with various life-forms utilizing and then discarding planetary bodies immediately suggests a Theosophical teaching summarized by H.P.B.:

In reality the Moon is only the satellite of the Earth in one respect, viz., that physically the Moon revolves around the Earth. But in every other respect it is the Earth which is the satellite of the Moon, and not *vice versa.* Startling as the statement may seem it is not without confirmation from scientific knowledge. It is evidenced by tides, by the cyclic changes in many forms of disease which coincide with the lunar phases; it can be traced in the growth of plants, and is very marked in the phenomena of human gestation and conception. The importance of the

> Moon and its influence on the Earth were recognized in every ancient religion, notably the Jewish, and have been remarked by many observers of psychical and physical phenomena. . . . (*S.D.* I, 180.)
>
> It is the moon which is the guide of the occult side of terrestrial nature, while the Sun is the regulator and factor of manifested life; and this truth was ever evident to the Seers and the adepts. (*S.D.* II, 595.)

*The Long Way Round*

The student of *The Secret Doctrine,* it should be noted, errs if he interprets H.P.B.'s dealing with nineteenth-century science as a partisan development of "anti-scientific" position. There are abundant evidences in *The Secret Doctrine* that H.P.B. trusted the spirit of genuine science as she did that of genuine religion. However materialistic the reaction of science against religious dogma was destined to be, initially, she prophesied that "the mighty rush of facts" would compel honest investigators to move in the direction of the ancient teachings.

The present proof of a relationship between lunar phase and rainfall was announced (*Science,* Sept. 7, 1962) in a report with the rather formidable title, "Lunar Synodical Period and Widespread Precipitation," by several scientists. A harmonic weather-moon relationship was described: the weather becoming first increasingly wet and then increasingly dry, going through one such cycle like a sine curve as the Moon waxed and another as it waned. Using Jennings' Weather Bureau report, the researchers worked with data for the fifty-year period from 1900 through 1949 on the dates and in the places of maximum twenty-four-hour precipitation per calendar month—16,057 maximum precipitation records collected from 1,544 weather stations operating continuously over the half century. Thus the data were highly representative of the occurrence of heavy precipitation in the continental United States. "As they drew out the implications of their data, it began to dawn on these men that they had a meteorological revolution on their hands. Since then, the revolution has exploded like a string of Chinese firecrackers into geophysics, aeronomy (the science of the upper atmosphere), and astrophysics."

*None so Blind as . . .*

Of special interest is Mr. Jackson's detailed report of how, since 1830—when a German weatherman wrote on the "Influence of the

Moon on the Variations of our Atmosphere"—letters, papers, and monographs by scientists kept on suggesting a lunar-weather relationship, only to be "shelved, filed, disregarded, or ridiculed." Yet, "like a buzzing horsefly, the idea would not go away." The Jackson article concludes with a significant paragraph:

> As Benedict de Spinoza wrote, "All things excellent are as difficult as they are rare." Although a tremendous amount of dogged and monotonous work had to be done against strong forces of rejection, the solid proof of a relationship between lunar phases and heavy precipitation on Earth beyond all cavil and equivocation, after centuries of fruitless efforts to find some such connection, has started a fresh wind blowing through many scientific disciplines.

While the true occultist will never gloat to see his theories ultimately vindicated, it nevertheless seems a fact that "karma adjusts even human laughter at the mutual expense of sects, learned societies, and individuals." (*S.D.* I, 646.)

*Ancient Witchcraft—Modern Medicine*

A feature article in the New York *Herald-Tribune* (Feb. 14), by David Hoffman, assembles results of biochemic researches that take the reader back to the Middle Ages. That this is literally so is shown by the following statement made by Richard Schultes, of Harvard (quoted by Margaret Kreig in her book *Green Medicine*):

> The most important methods for discovering new botanical drugs are the examination of ancient writings, the scientific interpretation of folklore and field work amongst primitive peoples still living in close association with the plant world.

Mrs. Kreig is convinced, after four years of research, that "the ancient witches knew very well what they were doing." For example, one of the ingredients of the witches' brew in *Macbeth* is "toe of frog"; and, she notes, "a most potent modern hallucination is bufotenin," obtained from toad skin. Mr. Hoffman comments:

> [Had these scientists] lived during the age when witchcraft flourished, they doubtless would have died at the stake. For the law then drew no distinction between the white witch, who cured the sick, and the black witch, who cast malevolent spells. Both, allegedly, had made pacts with the devil. In Germany alone, an estimated 100,000 "witches" were executed between the years 1350 and 1750. It was common then to find distinguished scientists who believed that witches periodically flew off at night to take part in the "sabbat."

*Rediscoveries of Herblore*

A poison and a drug that can anesthetize nerves in the skin comes from water hemlock. Mrs. Kreig tells of a German professor who, by following a seventeenth-century recipe, brewed a similar concoction. He and his colleagues rubbed the drug into their armpits and on their foreheads. The result: a twenty-four-hour sleep in which the scientists dreamed of wild rides, frenzied dancing, and other exploits often linked to medieval orgies. Quoting further from the news articles:

> Now thousands of scientists, like collectors of rare recipes for the kitchen, are studying the musty textbooks that deal with witchcraft and sorcery. For their pages list herbs and plants that have yielded, in the last decade, drugs that can dissolve certain solid cancers, relieve the pain of arthritis, strengthen the muscle in a failing heart, relax a patient for surgery and much more. . . .
>
> A common milkweed contains an active ingredient that destroys live human cancer cells in a test tube. . . . Prof. Saenz [of the University of San Jose] reported that the milkweed . . . was called "cancerillo" by the inhabitants of obscure villages in Central America. For generations and perhaps for centuries, it had been used against warts, cancers and other unwanted growths not only by Central Americans but also by Indians, Filipinos and natives of the Caribbean.

*Lore of Ancient India*

The article continues:

> The genus rauwolfia yielded reserpine, the powerful tranquilizer that has calmed thousands of maniacal schizophrenics, enabling them to lead useful lives. Modern science "discovered" the value of rauwolfia in 1947; the Indians were using it 1,000 years before Christ.
>
> Dr. Schultes, who spent years in the jungle . . . warns that time is running out, that civilization soon will extinguish all medical folklore. . . . How many drugs did the witches use that science has yet to discover?

Where did the Indians gain their knowledge of the virtue of certain plants? One explanation is that this knowledge was given to them by the primordial instructors of mankind, referred to in Theosophy as Mahatmas and Great Rishis. "To them," writes Mme. Blavatsky (*S.D.* II, 364), "is ascribed the invention of letters (the *Devanagari,* or the alphabet and language of the gods), of laws and legislature; of architecture, as of the various modes of magic, so-called; and of the medical use of plants."

*Opportunity for Synthesis*

M. S. Handler, writing for the New York *Times* (April 10), reports on a meeting of the Harlem Writers Guild. He quotes Miss Jean Bond, a Guild member:

> The Negro is fortunate in this society because he has many perceptions the white artist does not possess.
>
> The white man is only white. The Negro is black but he has been brought up as white. He therefore has a great deal to work with.

Mr. Handler has this suggestive comment on Miss Bond's intent:

> The Negro artist has a dual personality—a white man's society, and a black psyche given him by his own people. He is therefore able to see people, judge situations and understand motivations on two levels. . . .

The extracts quoted are evidence of an awareness of the Negro artist's psychological position in American life—he has the opportunity to assimilate and blend two cultures.

*The Heroic Image*

James Baldwin, in an essay published in 1951, described the American Negro as then unable to define and fufill the destiny Mr. Handler articulates:

> The fact is not that the Negro has no tradition but that there has as yet arrived no sensibility sufficiently profound and tough to make this tradition articulate. For a tradition expresses, after all, nothing more than the long and painful experience of a people; it comes out of the battle waged to maintain their integrity or, to put it more simply, out of their struggle to survive. (*Notes of a Native Son,* Beacon, 1955.)

The Negro's struggle to break through the limits imposed by other men's ideas to a universal mission is a Promethean one, and the Negro-hero is beginning to do this by a strong search of his own avenues to reality. Miss Bond and Mr. Baldwin help to show how this struggle is tied to the past through Negro tradition, to the present through his individuality, and to the future through his identity with every soul pursuing its odyssey toward selfhood. As an element in this cycle, these moments in the great egoic pilgrimage may be one index of the present awakening in the manasic potential of all men.